

REMARKS

Claims 1-3 and 5-10 remain pending in this application, with claim 1 being independent. Claims 1, 5, 6, and 8 have been amended. Claims 4, 11-14, and 16-22 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter.

Claims 1-14 and 16-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite.

First, cancellation of claims 4, 11-14, and 16-22 renders the rejections of those claims moot.

The remaining claims have been carefully reviewed and amended as deemed necessary to ensure that they conform fully to the requirements of Section 112, second paragraph, with special attention to the points raised in paragraph 1 of the Office Action. It is believed that the rejection under Section 112, second paragraph, has been obviated, and its withdrawal is therefore respectfully requested.

Claims 1-9, 11-14, and 16-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,603,232 to Van Dine. Claims 11, 12, and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,923,554 to Ozawa; and claims 17, 19, and 22, as being anticipated by JP 2002-361758. Claim 10 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious from Van Dine in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,548,932 to Weiglhofer; and claims 11, 12, 17, and 19-22, as being obvious from Weiglhofer.

First, cancellation of claims 4, 11-14, and 16-22 renders the rejections of those claims moot.

Applicant submits that independent claim 1, together with the claims dependent therefrom, are patentably distinct from the cited references for at least the following reasons.

Claim 1 is directed to a belt and tread drum, particularly for shaping a belt layer and/or a tread layer or another tire component provided with metal parts into a circumferential whole. One or more support members are arranged at the circumference of the drum and provided with a support surface for the tire component. Each support member is provided with through-holes opening in the support surface, wherein the support members comprise magnet sets having magnets for retaining the tire component on the support surface by magnetically attracting the metal parts. The magnet sets comprise holders for the magnets and are placed from the radial inside in the support members. The drum at the circumferential side comprises first portions that engage over the holders in a tangential and/or axial direction of the drum, and the drum at the circumferential side comprises second portions that engage over the magnets in tangential and/or axial direction of the drum. The magnets have upper surfaces extending into the through-holes, the upper surfaces of the magnets being aligned with the support surface.

One notable feature of amended claim 1 is that the upper surfaces of the magnets are exposed to the outside of the drum, i.e., the upper surfaces of the magnets are aligned with the support surface, and, therefore, can directly contact the tire components placed on the drum. See, e.g., Figures 3 and 5 of the present application, showing magnet 7b with its upper surface exposed.¹

Van Dine, as understood by Applicant, relates to a permanent magnet retaining arrangement for high speed rotors. However, Applicant has found nothing in Van Dine that would teach or suggest the above-noted feature of amended claim 1, i.e., that the upper

¹It is of course to be understood that the references to various portions of the present application are by way of illustration and example only, and that the claims are not limited by the details shown in the portions referred to.

surfaces of the magnets are aligned with the support surface. In Van Dine, there are always elements that cover the upper surfaces (see, e.g., magnet 24 of Fig. 1 of that patent).

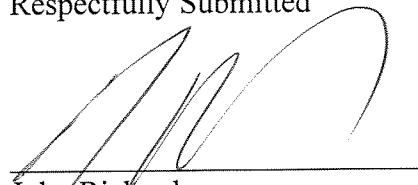
Accordingly, claim 1 is believed to be patentable over Van Dine.

A review of the other cited references has failed to reveal anything that would teach or suggest the above-noted feature.

The other claims in this application are each dependent from independent claim 1 discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual reconsideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Respectfully Submitted

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'John Richards', is written over a horizontal line.

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